

CQMC Coalition for Quality Maternity Care

8403 Colesville Rd, Suite 1550 • Silver Spring, MD 20910-6374

March 29, 2013

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
U.S. Senate
133 Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
U.S. Senate
135 Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Eliot Engel
U.S. House of Representatives
2161 Rayburn Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Stabenow & Grassley and Representative Engel,

On behalf of the Coalition for Quality Maternity Care (CQMC), a group of national professional, consumer, and human rights organizations that promote high quality maternity care for all women and newborns, we write to thank you for introducing the Quality Care for Moms and Babies Act (S. 425/ H.R. 896). CQMC is proud to endorse this legislation that would greatly improve the health care and outcomes of pregnant women, their babies, and their families.

With more than 40 percent of our nation's 4 million births covered by the Medicaid program, we must consider meaningful solutions that foster high-quality, high-value maternity care. One area in need of improvement is maternity quality measurement. The Quality Care for Moms and Babies Act would help address measurement gaps by reviewing and updating the core set of maternity quality measures for reporting in Medicaid and CHIP, as well as developing any new, needed measures. S. 425/H.R. 896 also would direct the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to develop Maternity Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) provider, facility, and health plan surveys to better measure the care experiences of childbearing women and newborns. There are serious limitations in applying the generic CAHPS surveys to maternity care, and the bill recognizes the various types of maternity care settings and caregivers as well as the unique considerations related to pain and shared decision-making.

In addition, we are pleased the bill would strengthen state and local efforts by supporting existing maternity care quality collaboratives and the establishment of new collaboratives. Eligible projects include reducing maternal and morbidity rates, improving the appropriate use of cesarean section, reducing early elective deliveries, reducing hospital readmissions, and increasing breastfeeding rates. Not only do these projects improve the health of women and babies, they also significantly reduce costs. Best practices learned from these collaboratives can--and should--be promoted in other areas.

The time is now to address maternity care in a meaningful way. To this end, CQMC is working to establish national strategies to ensure access to affordable, high quality maternity care is available to all. It seeks to achieve this goal by removing barriers to optimal maternal health practice, promoting models of care that are evidence-based, improving maternity care choices for women, and reducing disparities in maternal and newborn health outcomes.

Once again, CQMC appreciates your leadership on this critical health matter and stands ready to help you achieve enactment of S. 425/H.R. 896. If you wish to draw upon our assistance, please contact Patrick Cooney at (202) 347-0034 or via email at patrick@federalgrp.com

Sincerely,

American College of Nurse-Midwives
Amnesty International USA
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses
Black Women's Health Imperative
Centering Healthcare Institute
Childbirth Connection
International Center for Traditional Childbearing
Lamaze International
Midwives Alliance of North America
National Association of Certified Professional Midwives
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Health Network